

# Gus Lorenz, a reflection of Camas and its history

The long life of Gus Lorenz, who died Sunday, Aug. 6, at the age of 93, was a reflection of the life of Camas itself. For Gus Lorenz was involved in most every facet of what made Camas grow and prosper, whatever made the city livable and likable.

His influence was a factor in many important policy decisions through the years, affecting schools, parks, library, fire department, veterans, and civic issues he encountered as a member of the Camas City Council.

Just as he put quality into his work as a respected papermaker at the Crown Zellerbach mill, where he was employed for 45 years, retiring as Machine Room Superintendent, so also did he strive for quality in the planning that involved his community and its people.

His honesty, integrity and leadership ability were recognized early on as he quickly gained promotions at the mill, and became involved in other organizations. He

Lorenz was a man of vision, always thinking ahead to consequences of current actions or conditions. Years ago he was aware of contamination in Lackamas Lake. He was a thinking man and an exceptionally good citizen.

In the early days, the property adjoining the wooded area that was to become Crown Park, held the original Lorenz family home, where Gus and his six brothers and sisters were raised. They walked through the woods to the original school building on Garfield Street, to fish in Lackamas Lake, to swim in the mill ditch, to go downtown, or to the Columbia River to watch the steamboats carrying passengers to Portland or upriver.

The present modern Lorenz home is situated on the same property across from Crown Park, and so it was that the life of Gus Lorenz ended where it had begun, at home.

Lorenz was a member of the first class to graduate from Camas High School. It was 1914 and there were

the night, Inky would hide in the bushes and then loudly squawk-talk back to him. Gus once put a splint on a crow with a broken leg.

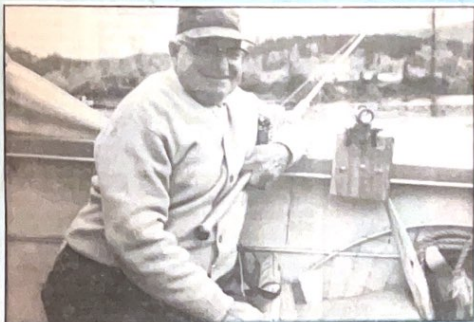
Regularly he fed the squirrels and made friends with them. They, in turn, raced up and down his fruit and nut trees and once took his long, long rope and used it to make a nest in one of his trees. He chuckled long and hard about that, but they were forgiven. For a short time he was feeding seagulls in the street. The gulls, obviously astray, were grateful for the handout.

In time there were six grandchildren who came often to visit and enjoy the current pet. They are Linda Lorenz (Stoller), Karen (now Lewis) and Steve Lorenz, who all lived next door as they grew up, and the Carey twins, Dennis and Danny, and their sister Donna (Urban). They all remember quality time with their grandfather.

"He was always happy to see us and always had time to pick an apple or two for us from his trees,



GUS LORENZ pictured above in 1916.



A LOVE OF natural wonders took Lorenz on many a fishing expedition with his wife Marie who would have celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary in September.

was one of the more interesting members of the community.

In 1924 he helped organize and was the first president of the Camas Volunteer Fire Department, being active for 27 years and holding an interest and affection for the department all his life.

He was the longest confirmed member of Zion Lutheran Church, having joined in 1911. Faithful, dedicated, Lorenz assumed an active part in church leadership and was a role model of the Christian faith.

His civic contributions included four years as a city councilman, four years on the school board and four years on the library board. He and his wife have always been valued members of the Camas-Washougal Historical Society. Lorenz, with his sharp memory, could always be counted on to furnish credible information, and to support any project that preserved historical artifacts for the public.

His membership in the American Legion dates back to 1918, over 70 years ago. Kiwanis activities also kept him busy and involved. His associates in any endeavor could always count on Gus to do a fine job.

His diligence and attention to detail served him well in his favorite hobby — growing chrysanthemums for show. His expertise and meticulous care produced perfect blooms year after year. His large colorful specimens were top winners, bringing him hundreds of blue ribbons, prizes and awards. In one Clark County Chrysanthemum Show, Lorenz took home 27 blue ribbons and the Sweepstakes Award. His flowers brought exclamations of delight and appreciation from all who viewed them. He was an authorized show judge — a recognized expert — a tremendous horticulturist.

His long membership in the Men's Garden Club brought outstanding results as he and other members encouraged the propagation of new species and varieties of both trees and plants by grafting and seed selection. One project undertaken by the club was to add an exotic tree from each state in the Union to Crown Park. Gus helped Ben Lancaster plant Gus helped Ben Lancaster plant the nearly 20 little trees on the north and west sides of the park, which are now tall and thriving. A memorable asset to the beauty of the park.

five members. (A sixth had moved before graduation.) It was the class that chose the school colors of black and red, a momentous decision, which has stood the test of time, with generations of students cheering for the Black and Red for 75 years. The young Gus Lorenz participated in football and basketball with great skill, and was a popular and handsome athlete.

Employment in the paper mill, which began during summer vacations from school, continued after high school, but was interrupted by two years in the Army Signal Corps. Then came marriage in 1920 to an attractive neighbor girl, Marie Meyer, who had come to Camas at the age of 11 with her parents and family from Baltimore. (They were surprised by the high wooden sidewalks and muddy streets.)

Married life brought the joy of two children to their home. Doris (Carey) and Howard Lorenz, now a Camas realtor, always had great respect for their parents and enjoyed their father's humorous teasing and devoted attention. His interests were learning experiences for them — his pet crows, his beekeeping, his greenhouse full of interesting plants, even orchids.

During World War II Lorenz had charge of a watch tower on Prune Hill, seeing that it was manned full-time to report plane sightings. It was just one of the ways he contributed to the war effort.

Being a native of Camas, where he was born in 1896, Gus always had a love for the natural wonders of the Pacific Northwest, and he enjoyed fishing its rivers. The late Dr. Andresen and his wife Frances (who is now living in Portland) were often enthusiastic companions on fishing expeditions to Canada with the Lorenzes. Those were happy and fun times, resulting in great stories to be told later to family and friends.

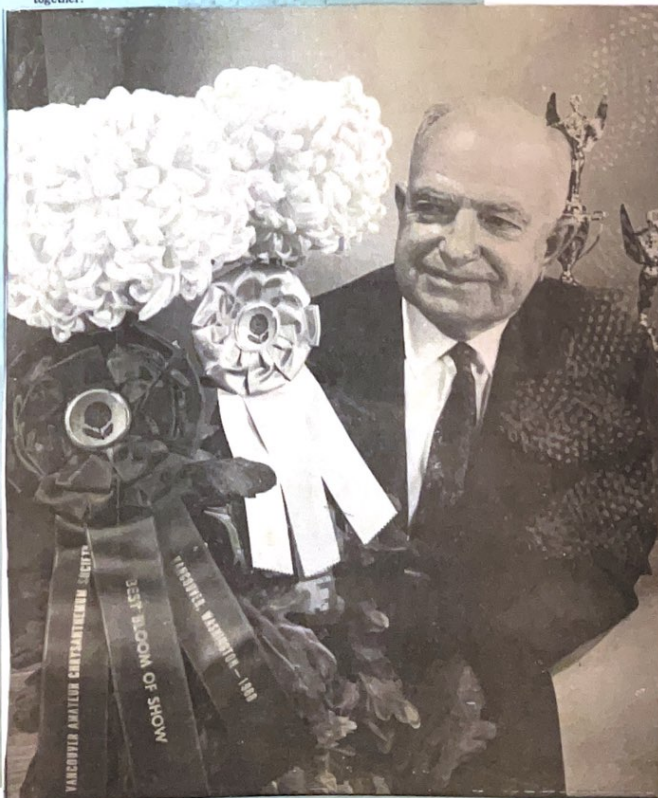
Tending the large vegetable garden and orchard behind the Lorenz home kept Gus outdoors much of the time and he usually had a pet or two, like the crows he brought home from the park. Inky, a baby crow that he raised, grew up to be just as smart as his caretaker. When Gus would tag his young chrysanthemum plants, Inky would come along behind him and pull the plastic tags up one at a time. Whenever Gus called him in the evening to put him in his cage for

or point out a hummingbird at one of his red hummingbird feeders," recalls Linda. "They were always there for us."

And now, there are 10 great-grandchildren, eight boys and two girls. The work ethic and moral values that Gus Lorenz lived by will be carried on. He leaves a large, loving family who all enjoy being together.

"Gus was a quiet man with lots of friends he liked to talk to," says wife Marie, who is 90. "He was always gardening and took pride in his home and yard. He loved his kids and grandchildren and the lively little ones, you bet. He was a good man!"

He was also well-loved.



AN AVID GARDENER, Lorenz, won numerous ribbons and awards for his chrysanthemums which he raised in his garden. In addition to

flowers, he also worked in the family vegetable garden and orchard.